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Document No. 1.

CARTA de Fray Andres Aguirre al Ylmo S^{ra} Arzobispo de Megico participandole la conveniencia de reconocer y descubrir la costa N. O. de la Nueva España y dando noticias de unas islas ricas y de gente civilizada á donde aportó una nave portuguesa y se hallan de los 35 á 40 grados de latitud norte.

Ylustrisimo Señor—El spiritu Santo more siempre en la anima de vuestra señoria ilustrisima. el descubrimiento que vuestra señoria manda hacer assi para entender la disposicion de la costa, puertos y calidades de la tierra y gente della, que hasta agora está descubierta al poniente de esta Nueva España en la mar del sur, como para proseguir el descubrimiento de aquella costa y tierra desde cuarenta y un grado de latitud adelante es de mucha ymportancia y muy necesario assi para la buelta de las naos de las yslas filipinas y de todas las partes del poniente como para entender y saver la disposicion y calidad de la tierra y gente de ella y yslas que se entiende ay de mucha ymportancia cercana á aquella costa. aunque las naos que vienen de poniente cada año al puerto de acapulco rreconocen aquella costa y á vista de ella navegan mas de quini-entas leguas, no se save hasta agora que puertos ó reparos tiene ymporta mucho saverse para que las naos que vienen necesitadas de rreparar por haver navegado hasta aquella costa de dos mill leguas sin hazer escala en tierra alguna puedan rreparar y proveer sus necesidades.

no es de menor ymportancia proseguirse el descubrimiento de aquella costa de los cuarenta y un grados de latitud adelante para entender los secretos della, porque tiene por cierto que es continente con la costa de la china sino las divide un angosto estrecho que llaman de anian que segun se tiene noticia, esta es lo último descubierto de la costa de la china en cinquenta y dos grados de latitud. en aquel parage y en el que ay de las yslas de Japon hasta lo último dèscubierto de nuestra costa segun el Padre Fray Andres de Urdaneta tuvo relacion de un capitan portugues ay yslas muy ricas muy pobladas de gente de mucha policia, la qual rrelacion yo bi y ley y yendo el y yo á España á dar quenta á su magestad del subceso de la primera jornada que por su mandado hizimos en la qual se descubrieron y poblaron las yslas Philipinas y se descubrió la navegacion y buelta de ellas á esta nueva española, el dicho padre

dió esta relacion á su magestad y yo tomé copia della y la guardé hasta que partiendo de españa en esta flota se perdió la nao en que yo venia y en ella se me perdió la rrelacion y todo lo que traia y su magestad me havia hecho merced y limosna. Lo que en rresolucion contenia es lo siguiente.

“ una nao portuguesa salió de malaca para las yslas de Japon y cargó en la ciudad de Canton las mercaderias de China y llegando á vista de Japon le dió un temporal poniente tan recio que no pudo tomar aquellas yslas y corrió con poca vela ocho dias el tiempo muy cerrado sin haver rreconocido tierra alguna; al noveno dia abonanzó el tiempo y aclaró y tuvieron vista de dos yslas grandes, arribaron á una dellas en un buen puerto poblado con una gran ciudad cercada de buen muro de piedra, estaban en el puerto muchos navios grandes y medianos, luego que entraron en el puerto acudió á la nao mucha gente de la tierra bien vestidos y tratados y mostrando á los de la nao mucho amor y sabiendo que eran mercaderes invió el señor de aquella ysla y ciudad á dezir al capitan de la nao que saliese y los que quisiese de su gente en tierra y sin recelo alguno de que se les hiciese agravio, antes se ofrecia todo buen acogimiento y llevase memoria de las mercaderías que traia en su nao porque se las tomarian y rrescatarian á su contento, el capitan comunicó con su gente esto y se determinó inviar á la ciudad al escribano de la nao con la memoria de las mercaderias y dos mercaderes uno portugues y otro armenio vecinos de Malaca. El Señor de la tierra los rrescivió en su casa que era grande y bien edificada y los trató con mucho amor y rregalo y entendiendose por señas y que la tierra era muy abundante y rrica de plata y otras cosas, seda y ropa volvieron el escribano y el mercader portugues á la nao par sacar las mercaderias en una cassa que le dieron para ello y el armenio quedó con el Señor de la tierra y fué tratado con mucho rregalo, hasta que sacadas las mercaderias en tierra y acudiendo gran numero de gente á rrescatar con plata en gran cantidad en treynta y tantos dias vendieron todas sus mercaderias haciendo grande y rrica ganancia conque quedaron todos muy rricos y cargaron su nao de plata; el tiempo que en esta ysla estuvieron y entendieron que el señor della lo era de la otra que estava á vista quatro leguas y de otras que cerca dellas avia todas ellas rricas de plata y muy pobladas. La gente blanca y bien dispuesta bien tratada y vestida de seda y rropa fina de algodón, gente amorosa y muy afable. La lengua diferente de los chinos y japoses y facil de tomar porque en menos de quarenta dias que los portugueses estuvieron en aquella ysla se entendian con los naturales. Son aquellas yslas abundantes de buenos mantenimierftos, arroz que es el pan que usan, aves como las nues-

tras en gran abundancia, patos mansos y muchos puercos, cabras, bufanos y mucha caça de venados y jabalies en gran abundancia, de diversas aves y volateria y muchos pescados y buenos y grande abundancia de frutas de muchas diferencias : el temple de la tierra muy bueno y sano. estan aquellas yslas de treynta y cinco grados á quarenta no se puede entender la longitud del japon á ellas por aver corrido con tormentas y el tiempo muy cerrado y oscuro. Corrieron de japon á levante y echo su rrescate volvieron á Malaca pusieron por nombre á estas yslas por respeto del mercader armenio que entre la gente de la nao era muy respetado, yslas de harmenio." Esto es lo que de la rrelacion tengo de memoria assi para descubrir estas yslas como otras en aquel parage y golfo. Como para lo demas de aquella costa es de mucha importancia hacerse este descubrimiento para lo hacer seran muy acomodadas las dos acabras del porte y fabrica que don Juan de Guzman dixere, como quien tambien lo entiende en lo qual y en todo lo demas tocante á esta jornada pueda vuestra señoria ilustrisma seguir su parecer suplique á nuestro señor sea para gran servicio sullo y de su Magestad. Ylustrisimo Señor. De vuestra señoria ilustrisima menor capelan. FRAY ANDRES DE AGUIRRE.

TRANSLATION.

Letter of Fray Andres de Aguirre to the Most Illustrious Lord Archbishop of Mexico, bringing to his notice the usefulness of exploring the northwest coast of New Spain and giving information of some rich islands, inhabited by civilized people, where a Portuguese ship touched, and which are in from 35 to 40 degrees of north latitude.

Most Illustrious Lord : May the Holy Spirit ever dwell in the soul of your most illustrious lordship. The voyage of discovery which your lordship orders to be made, as well for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of the coast and harbors, and the quality of the land and condition of its people, to the present time discovered to the westward of this New Spain in the South Sea, as for the further prosecution of the exploration of that coast and region beyond the forty-first degree of latitude, is of great importance and very necessary in connection with the return voyage of vessels from the

Philippines and all parts of the west, and for the purpose of understanding and knowing the lay of the land and its qualities and those of its people and of the islands of great importance which are understood to lie near that coast. Although the ships which come every year from the west to the port of Acapulco make a landfall on that coast and sail within sight of it for more than five hundred leagues, to the present time it is not known what harbors or places where repairs can be made it has. It is very important to know this, so that the ships which come needing repairs, after reaching that coast from a distance of two thousand leagues, without touching anywhere, may be repaired and their needs may be provided for.

Nor is it of less importance that the exploration of that coast be continued beyond forty-one degrees of latitude in order that its secrets may be revealed, for it is held as certain that it is a portion of the same continent as that of China, unless it be that they are separated by a narrow strait called Anian,¹ which, according to notices had, is in that part of the coast of China lately explored, in fifty-two degrees of latitude. In that region, and lying between the Japanese islands and that portion of our coast recently discovered, according to the narrative of a Portuguese captain which Father Fray Andres de Urdaneta² had in his possession, there are very rich islands very thickly populated by people of urbane customs. This narrative I saw and read while he and myself were going to Spain in order to give to His Majesty an account of the success of the

1. At this time all navigators believed in the existence of a strait by which communication could be had between the Atlantic and the Pacific. It was the hope of finding this means of escape with his booty-laden ship that brought Francis Drake to the Californian coast in 1579. Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado claimed that, in 1588, he entered the strait on the coast of Labrador and emerged at the Pacific end in latitude sixty. Juan de Fuca asserted that, in 1592, he entered the strait from the Pacific in latitude forty-seven, and that he sailed through it to the Atlantic. But this elusive strait was pushed farther and farther to the northward until at length it has become Bering's strait and the north-west passage.

2. In his youth and early manhood Andres de Urdaneta had been a soldier, and was famous as a navigator and cosmographer, and he had sailed in this capacity in one of the ships which, under the command of Garcia de Loaisa, had visited the Philippines and other islands of the South Sea. In 1563 the King of Spain ordered Viceroy Velasco, of New Spain, to send colonists for the settlement of the Philippines. Meanwhile Captain Urdaneta had entered the order of Austin friars at the city of Mexico. He and five of his brethren, among whom was Andres de Aguirre, the writer of this letter, were selected to go on the expedition as missionaries. The command was given to Miguel Gomez de Legazpi, a resident of the city of Mexico; and, on the 21st November, 1564, a fleet of four vessels sailed from the port of Navidad in Colima for the islands. This was the expedition which founded Manila. Orders had been given to Gomez de Legazpi for the determination, if possible, of a practicable return route from the islands to New Spain. On the 1st June, 1565, the flagship, the *San Pedro*, under command of Felipe Salcedo, a youth of sixteen years of age and grandson of the commander, was dispatched from Zebu for that purpose, and Fathers Urdaneta and Aguirre sailed in her. The course of the *San Pedro* was eastward to the Ladrone, thence northward to latitude 38° north, and thence, with a favoring slant of wind, eastward to the American coast, the ship making a landfall somewhere to the northward of what is now Monterey Bay. The voyage was long and disastrous. The ship had sailed with a crew very limited in number; during the voyage Salcedo, the navigating officer and fourteen others died; and, when at length she arrived at Acapulco, there were not sufficient able-bodied men on board to bring her to an anchor. The two friars had tended the sick and shriven the dying, had navigated and steered the ship and had prepared from day to day the chart which was used, for many years afterwards, by the navigating officers of Manila galleons.

first voyage we made by his order, during which the Philippine islands were discovered and settled³ and the manner of navigating thither and of making the return voyage thence to New Spain was determined.

The said father gave this narrative to His Majesty and I made a copy of it, which I kept until, leaving Spain in this fleet, the ship in which I came was lost, and in it the narrative and all I was bringing with me, on which account His Majesty gave me a reward and alms. What in effect the narrative contained is as follows :

"A Portuguese ship sailed from Malacca for the islands of Japan and at the city of Canton took on board Chinese goods. Arriving within sight of Japan she encountered a storm coming from the west, so severe that it was impossible to fetch those islands and she ran before it under very little sail for eight days, the weather being very thick and no land having been seen. On the ninth day the storm was spent and the weather cleared, and they made two large islands. They reached one of these at a good port well peopled, there being a great city surrounded by a good stone wall. There were many large and medium sized vessels in port. Immediately on their entering the harbor there flocked to the ship a great number of persons well-dressed and cared for and manifesting much affection for the people of the ship. The lord of that island and city, learning that they were merchants, sent to the captain of the ship to say that he and those of his people he might select should come ashore without any fear that they would do them harm. On the contrary, he assured them, they should be received well, and he requested that they should bring with them the manifest of the goods the ship brought, for they would take them and trade for them to their content. The captain communicated this to his people, and it was resolved that the notary of the ship should be sent ashore with the manifest and two merchants, one a Portuguese and the other an Armenian, residents of Malacca. The lord of the land received them in his house, which was large and well built, and treated them with affection, making them presents, they understanding one another by signs. The land was very rich in silver and other things, silk and clothing. The notary and the Portuguese merchant returned to the ship in order to land merchandise and store it in a building which was assigned to them

3. Friar Andres is in error here, for the Philippines were discovered by Magelbaens in 1521, in the course of his famous voyage, and it was on one of these islands that he lost his life in a skirmish with the natives. Probably it was some error similar to this which led a writer employed by Mr. H. H. Bancroft to assert that the Philippines were discovered by the expedition under Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, which sailed from Natividad in New Spain, in November, 1541! See *History of the Pacific States*, x. p. 130 (table of contents of cap. VI) and the text on p. 137.

for that purpose, while the Armenian remained with the lord of the land and was treated very hospitably. The merchandise having been taken ashore, and a vast number of persons coming to purchase it, bringing a great quantity of silver, it came to pass that in some thirty days they sold all the goods, making great gains, so that all became very rich, and they loaded the ship with silver. During the time that they were on the island they learned that the lord was suzerain of the other island also, which was within sight, four leagues away, and of others which were near to these, all being rich in silver and very populous. This people is white and well-formed, well cared for and clothed in silk and fine clothing of cotton; an affectionate and very affable people. The language differs from that of the Chinese as well as that of the Japanese, and is readily learned, for, in less than in forty days that the Portuguese passed on the island, they were able to converse with the natives. These islands abound in the means of maintaining life well—rice, which is the bread they use; fowls like ours in great number; tame ducks and many hogs; goats; buffaloes and deer and wild boars in great abundance; various birds and game and fishes many and good, and a great plenty of many kinds of fruit. The climate of the land is very good and healthy. These islands are in from thirty-five to forty degrees. The difference in longitude between them and Japan cannot be arrived at, because they had run before the gale and the weather was very thick and obscure. They ran from Japan to the eastward; and, having disposed of their merchandise, they returned to Malacca. They named these islands, out of regard for the Armenian merchant, who was greatly respected by the people of the ship, 'Isles of the Armenian.''' This is as much of the narrative, as I remember it, as will serve for the discovery of these islands as well as others in that region and corner of the sea. As regards the rest of that coast, it is very important that this exploration should be made; and for this purpose two vessels of the burthen and build which Don Juan de Guzman may determine will serve. With regard to who should take part in the decision of this matter, as well as in all things concerning this exploration, your most illustrious lordship will follow his own judgment. I pray Our Lord that this may be for his great service and that of His Majesty. Most Illustrious Lord: From the least chaplain of your most illustrious lordship.

FRAY ANDRES DE AGUIRRE.⁴

4. This letter is not dated. It is addressed to the Archbishop of Mexico, and Father Aguirre mentions that his lordship ordered a voyage to be made to the northwest coast. On the 25th September, 1584, Pedro de Moya y Contreras, who had succeeded Alonso de Montúfar in the archiepiscopal see, became sixth viceroy of New Spain and so governed as such until the 18th October, 1585. I am inclined to think, therefore, that this letter must

Document No. 2.

CAPITULO de una carta del Virey de la Nueva España el Marques de Villamanrique á S. M. esponiendo lo que considera oportuno referente al descubrimiento de las costas de la mar del sur y dando noticia de una embarcacion que sale con este intento, su fecha de 10 de Mayo de 1585.

14. Dice vuestra magestad en la misma carta, en el capitulo segundo della que ansi mismo escribió el arzobispo que los navios que vienen de las Filipinas reconocen la costa de esta tierra setecientas leguas y mas y menos antes de llegar al puerto de gapulco y vienen ansi á vista de tierra y que como no saben los puertos de toda esta costa aunque tienen necesidad de tomar tierra para rreparar los navios y proveerse de agua y otras cosas no lo pueden hacer ni tienen donde ampararse de tiempos contrarios que de ordinario corren por aquellas partes y que lo mismo sucede á los navios que antes de llegar á la costa padecen temporal ú otras necesidades que por no tener puerto en ella buelven arribar á las yslas de donde salieron y que para que esto cesase y vuestra magestad tuviese noticia de toda aquella costa que algunos dicen corre hasta confinar con la tierra firme de la china y otros que acaba en el estrecho que llaman de anian que va á salir al parage de irlanda, havia mandado hazer dos fragatas para que saliesen á reconocer buscar y descubrir todos los puertos é yslas rrios, montes é avitaciones que ay e de que lenguas é gentes era abitada é poblada e de su modo de vivir y que frutos y aprovechamientos tienen graduandolo y descubriendolo todo y que para ello tenia piloto y cosmografo muy bueno y que demas de lo sobredicho por esta via y á menos costa que por tierra

have been written during the twelvemonth indicated. After the latter date no prelate became viceroy until Archbishop Garcia Guerra succeeded Don Luis de Velasco, and he ruled from the month of June, 1611, until his death in February, 1612. He gave no orders for a voyage to the northwest coast; and Father Aguirre, if he were still living in 1611, must have been quite aged. Moreover it is not probable that Father Aguirre would have allowed so many years to pass before making the narrative of the Portuguese captain known to the viceroy of New Spain. In fact, an allusion in one of the documents contained in this volume indicates that the story of the "Isles of the Armenian" was known to the authorities of New Spain shortly after the time of Moya y Contreras. The narrative itself appears to be just such a yarn as navigators have been given to spinning for several thousand years. Possibly the story was told to the Spaniards by one of a rival nation for the purpose of putting them on a false scent, for in those days all sailors, and landmen as well, believed firmly that the seas were full of undiscovered islands inhabited by peoples rich beyond compare. As a matter of fact there are no such islands as those of which the sailor gives a description. A ship sailing from Canton to within sight of Japan and thence running before a gale from the west for eight days, on the ninth would not be in the neighborhood of any islands. There is an island called "Rica de Plata," in latitude thirty-three north, but it is in longitude one hundred and seventy-one east of Greenwich, more than forty degrees to the eastward of the Portuguese captain's landfall in Japan. It is not probable that a ship of that period could have run that distance in the time mentioned; nor are any such people or beasts as those described by Father Aguirre to be found on "Rica de Plata."